

## CLAIMS

We claim:

1           1. A method in a computing system for rewarding the provision of useful  
2 item reviews, comprising:

3           receiving item reviews, each received item review corresponding to an  
4 identified item and originating with an identified reviewer;

5           displaying the received item reviews to customers of a merchant in conjunction  
6 with controls usable by the customers to indicate the level of usefulness of each of the  
7 reviews;

8           receiving and storing indications of the activation of the displayed controls;

9           based upon the stored indications of the activation of the displayed controls,  
10 determining a quantitative measure of the level of usefulness of each of the item reviews;

11           for each reviewer, based upon the quantitative measures determined for each of  
12 the reviews of the reviewer, determining a score for each reviewer; and

13           displaying information about at least a portion of the reviewers that reflects  
14 their scores.

1           2. The method of claim 1 wherein information is displayed about each of a  
2 subset of the reviewers having the highest scores.

1           3. The method of claim 1 wherein names of the reviewers are displayed in  
2 the order of descending reviewer scores.

1           4. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining for a selected  
2 reviewer a rank of the reviewer's score among the scores of all reviewers,  
3 and wherein the information displayed about the selected reviewer includes an  
4 indication of the determined rank.

1               5. The method of claim 4 wherein the included indication of the  
2 determined rank directly indicates the determined rank.

1               6. The method of claim 4 wherein the included indication of the  
2 determined rank indicates a range of ranks containing the determined rank.

1               7. The method of claim 4 wherein the information displayed about the  
2 selected reviewer is displayed in a web page directed to the selected reviewer.

1               8. The method of claim 4 wherein the information displayed about the  
2 selected reviewer is displayed in conjunction with a review of the selected reviewer.

1               9. The method of claim 4 wherein the information displayed about the  
2 selected reviewer is displayed in a prominent location within a web site operated by the  
3 merchant.

1               10. A method in a computer system for evaluating an author of item  
2 reviews, comprising:

3                 displaying one or more item reviews submitted by the author to a plurality of  
4 consumers;

5                 soliciting from the consumers to which an item review is displayed an  
6 indication of whether the review is helpful;

7                 receiving and storing any solicited indication provided by the consumers to  
8 which item reviews are displayed, each indication being either positive or negative; and

9                 applying a formula to obtain a score for the author based upon stored  
10 indications.

1               11. The method of claim 10 wherein the applied formula considers the  
2 number of positive indications received for each of the reviews submitted by the author, and  
3 the net number of positive and negative indications received for each of the reviews  
4 submitted by the author.

1           12. The method of claim 11 wherein the applied formula further considers  
2 whether each review submitted by the author is the first review submitted for the identified  
3 item.

1           13. The method of claim 10 wherein the applied formula considers, for each  
2 review submitted by the author, the number of consumers to whom the review was displayed  
3 that subsequently ordered the item identified by the review.

1           14. The method of claim 10 wherein the applied formula is

$$k ( 2 ( A + B + C ) - ( D + E ) ),$$

3 where k is a constant, and A is the number of reviews submitted by the author for which at  
4 least 3 positive indications were received, and B is the number of reviews submitted by the  
5 author for which at least 10 positive indications were received, and C is the number of  
6 reviews submitted by the author that were the first reviews submitted for the corresponding  
7 item and for which at least 3 positive indications were received, and D is the number of  
8 reviews submitted by the author for which at least 3 more negative indications than positive  
9 indications were received, and E is the number of reviews submitted by the author for which  
10 at least 10 more negative indications than positive indications were received.

1           15. The method of claim 10 wherein the method is performed reiteratively  
2 to maintain an updated score for the author.

1           16. The method of claim 15 wherein one or more additional item reviews  
2 submitted by the author are displayed in subsequent iterations that are not displayed in the  
3 first iteration.

1           17. The method of claim 15 wherein the method is performed for multiple  
2 authors to obtain a score for each of the multiple authors.

1           18. The method of claim 10 wherein the formula ignores indications  
2 received from a given consumer for any review received subsequently to the first indication  
3 received from that consumer for the review.

1           19. The method of claim 10 wherein the formula ignores indications  
2 received from a given consumer for reviews of the author received subsequently to a  
3 maximum number of indications received from that consumer for reviews of the author.

1           20. The method of claim 19 wherein the maximum number is 5.

1           21. A method in a computing system for rewarding the provision of useful  
2 item reviews, comprising:

3           receiving a plurality of item reviews each from a source;

4           publishing each of the plurality of item reviews;

5           assessing the usefulness of the published item reviews;

6           based upon the assessment of usefulness, selecting one or more of the  
7 published item reviews; and

8           providing rewards to the sources of the selected item reviews.

1           22. The method of claim 21 wherein the sources of item reviews are authors  
2 of those item reviews.

1           23. The method of claim 21 wherein the sources of item reviews are brokers  
2 of those item reviews.

1           24. A computing system for rewarding the provision of useful item reviews,  
2 comprising:

3           a receiving subsystem that receives a plurality of item reviews each from a  
4 source;

5           a publication subsystem that publishes each of the plurality of item reviews;

6           a usefulness assessment subsystem that assesses the usefulness of the published  
7 item reviews;

8           an item review selection subsystem that, based upon the assessment of  
9 usefulness, selects one or more of the published item reviews; and

10          a reward provision system that provides rewards to the sources of the selected  
11 item reviews.

1           25. A method in a computing system for rewarding the provision of useful  
2 item reviews, comprising:

3           receiving a plurality of item reviews each having an author;

4           assessing the usefulness of the received item reviews;

5           based upon the assessment of usefulness of their reviews, selecting an author of  
6 received item reviews; and

7           publishing a laudatory message about the selected author.

1           26. A computer-readable medium whose contents cause a computing system  
2 to reward the provision of useful item reviews, comprising:

3           receiving a plurality of item reviews each having an author;

4           assessing the usefulness of the received item reviews;

5           based upon the assessment of usefulness of their reviews, selecting an author of  
6 received item reviews; and

7           publishing a laudatory message about the selected author.

1           27. One or more generated data signals collectively conveying a display  
2 document data structure, comprising:

3           information configured to cause display of an indication of the identity of an  
4 author of one or more useful item reviews; and

5           information configured to cause display of a message that is laudatory with  
6 respect to the author.

1               28. The data signals of claim 27 wherein the information configured to  
2 cause display of a message that is laudatory with respect to the author is configured to cause  
3 a display of a quantitative rank of the level of usefulness of reviews by the author.

1               29. The data signals of claim 27 wherein the information configured to  
2 cause display of a message that is laudatory with respect to the author is configured to cause  
3 a display of a rank value indicating the level of usefulness of reviews by the author.

1               30. The data signals of claim 27 wherein the information configured to  
2 cause display of a message that is laudatory with respect to the author is configured to cause  
3 a display of a range of rank values indicating the level of usefulness of reviews by the author.

1               31. The data signals of claim 27 wherein the data structure further contains  
2 information configured to cause display of a review authored by the author.

1               32. The data signals of claim 27 wherein the data structure further contains  
2 information configured to cause display of indications of the identities of additional authors  
3 of one or more useful item reviews.

1               33. The method of claim 27 wherein the data structure embodies a web page  
2 located prominently in the web site operated by a merchant.

1               34. One or more computer memories collectively containing a display  
2 document data structure, comprising:  
3                      information configured to cause display of an indication of the identity of an  
4 author of one or more useful item reviews; and  
5                      information configured to cause display of a message that is laudatory with  
6 respect to the author.

1           35. A method in a computer system for prioritizing received item reviews,  
2 comprising:

3           receiving a plurality of item reviews submitted for publication, each item  
4 review identifying an author associated with the item review;

5           for each received item review,

6           if an indication of the aggregate level of usefulness of published reviews  
7 of the author identified by the item review indicates that the aggregate level of usefulness of  
8 published reviews of the author identified by the item review is high, expediting processing  
9 of the received item review; and

10           if an indication of the aggregate level of usefulness of published reviews  
11 of the author identified by the item review indicates that the aggregate level of usefulness of  
12 published reviews of the author identified by the item review is low, omitting to expedite  
13 processing of the received item review.

1           36. The method of claim 35 wherein expediting processing of the received  
2 item review includes publishing the received item review earlier than it would have been  
3 published if processing of the received item review was not expedited.

1           37. The method of claim 35 wherein each submitted item review undergoes  
2 editorial review, and wherein expediting processing of the received item review includes  
3 causing the received item review to undergo editorial review earlier than it would have if  
4 processing of the received item review was not expedited.

1           38. The method of claim 35 wherein the submitted item review undergoes  
2 editorial review if its processing is not expedited, and wherein the submitted item review  
3 does not undergo editorial review if its processing is expedited.